

**REMARKS**

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated July 11, 2005, has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,808,707 to Niibori et al. (hereinafter "Niibori"). Claims 6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibori in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,195,141 B1 to Kawano et al. (hereinafter "Kawano"). Claims 12-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibori in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,503,665 to Muramatsu et al. (hereinafter "Muramatsu"). Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Niibori in view of Muramatsu as applied to claims 12-16 and further in view of Kawano. Claims 1-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Prior Art (Fig. 2) in view of Niibori. Claims 6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Prior Art (Fig. 2) in view of Niibori as applied to claims 1-5 and 7 and further in view of Kawano. Claims 12-16 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Prior Art (Fig. 2) in view of Niibori and Muramatsu. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Prior Art (Fig. 2) in view of Niibori and Muramatsu as applied to claims 12-16 and 18 and further in view of Kawano.

The rejection of claims 1-18 is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Claims 1-6 are allowable over the cited references in that each of these claims recites a combination of elements including, for example, "a pad provided between the panel guide and the backlight assembly and fully offset from the light source and maintaining a distance between

the panel guide and the backlight assembly”. None of the cited references including Niibori, Kawano and Muramatsu, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. The structure of claim 1 of the present invention is different from the Niibori structure in that Niibori discloses “The backlight unit 25 includes a backlight-supporting member 26 and a lighting unit 27 fixed to the lower side thereof. The lighting unit 27 has a side light-structure including tubular light sources 8 (e.g., of hot cathode lamps) each disposed on a side thereof, a transparent acrylic plate 29 as a light-guide member superposed with a diffusive sheet (not shown) for providing scattered diffusive light at the center and a reflecting member 30 covering the circumference of the tubular light sources 28” (Niibori, col. 12, lines 16 - col. 13, line 5). Applicants note that in Niibori, the pad 18 is not “between the panel guide and the backlight assembly and fully offset from the light source” as those terms are understood in claim 1, because the pad is not on the lighting unit 27.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and claims 2-6, which depend from claim 1, are allowable over the cited references.

Claims 7-11 are allowable over the cited references in that each of these claims recites a combination of elements including, for example, “a first pad provided between the panel guide and the light guide separating the liquid crystal panel and the optical sheets from the lamp, said pad fully overlapping the light guide”. None of the cited references including Niibori, Kawano and Muramatsu, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. The structure of claim 7 of the present invention is different from the Niibori structure in that Niibori discloses “The backlight unit 25 includes a backlight-supporting member 26 and a lighting unit 27 fixed to the lower side thereof. The lighting unit 27 has a side light-structure including tubular light sources 8 (e.g., of hot cathode lamps) each disposed on a side

thereof, a transparent acrylic plate 29 as a light-guide member superposed with a diffusive sheet (not shown) for providing scattered diffusive light at the center and a reflecting member 30 covering the circumference of the tubular light sources 28” (Niibori, col. 12, lines 16 - col. 13, line 5). Applicants note that in Niibori, the pad 18 is not “between the panel guide and the light guide separating the liquid crystal panel and the optical sheets from the lamp, said pad fully overlapping the light guide” as those terms are understood in claim 7, because the pad is not near the transparent acrylic plate 29.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 7 and claims 8-11, which depend from claim 7, are allowable over the cited references.

Claims 12-18 are allowable over the cited references in that each of these claims recites a combination of elements including, for example, “a pad provided between the panel guide and the backlight assembly fully offset from the light source, said pad maintaining a distance between the panel guide and the backlight assembly”. None of the cited references including Niibori, Kawano and Muramatsu, singly or in combination, teaches or suggests at least this feature of the claimed invention. The structure of claim 1 of the present invention is different from the Niibori structure in that Niibori discloses “The backlight unit 25 includes a backlight-supporting member 26 and a lighting unit 27 fixed to the lower side thereof. The lighting unit 27 has a side light-structure including tubular light sources 8 (e.g., of hot cathode lamps) each disposed on a side thereof, a transparent acrylic plate 29 as a light-guide member superposed with a diffusive sheet (not shown) for providing scattered diffusive light at the center and a reflecting member 30 covering the circumference of the tubular light sources 28” (Niibori, col. 12, lines 16 - col. 13, line 5). Applicants note that in Niibori, the pad 18 is not “between the

panel guide and the backlight assembly fully offset from the light source”, as those terms are understood in claim 12, because the pad is not on the lighting unit 27.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 12 and claims 13-18, which depend from claim 12, are allowable over the cited references


Applicants believe the foregoing discussion place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. *A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.*

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 9, 2005

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